

economy. Their suggestions helped us to push for the purchase of the Baca Ranch property that is crucial to maintaining the fragile Dunes ecosystem. Mike Blenden, the local manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, played a significant role in helping me to craft the "Refuge" portion of the bill. Steve Chaney, who serves as superintendent of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve, was also an invaluable source of support and dedication throughout the entire process. I was fortunate to receive the support of Colorado State Legislators Gigi Dennis and Lewis Entz, who teamed up to pass a resolution in the Colorado legislature that supported our efforts to create the new National Park and Preserve. My staff and I were also grateful for the dedication of various individuals from the Governor's office and the Colorado State Land Board, who worked with us to help structure the finances of the Baca Ranch land purchase. The Action 22 organization also passed a supportive resolution encouraging the park's re-designation. However, this legislation could never have been successful without the initial support of the grass-roots efforts of people like local organizer Dion Stewart, Rio Grande County Commissioners Randall Brown, Doug Davie, and Vern Rominger, Alamosa County Commissioners Darius Allen, Charlotte Bobicki, and Bob Zimmerman, and citizens throughout the region.

Despite this overwhelming support from state and local officials, neighboring communities and statewide organizations, H.R. 4095 had opposition from two of Colorado's U.S. Congressional Representatives from Teller County and Eastern Colorado, whose disagreements centered on concerns over control of water usage in Colorado and a belief that the Great Sand Dunes National Monument was not on par with our other national parks.

In response to the clear intentions of the Representative from Teller County to kill the legislation through the Committee process in the U.S. House of Representatives, it became clear that we would have to try another route. I went to Senator WAYNE ALLARD and worked out a strategy with him to pass an identical measure in the Senate. Senator ALLARD quickly agreed and S. 2547 was introduced on May 11, 2000. Within a month, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a Subcommittee hearing and a full Committee mark-up. On October 5, 2000 the U.S. Senate unanimously passed S. 2547. Pursuant to a prior arrangement with the Speaker of the House, the following day the Senate-passed version of my bill was received in the House and held at the desk for subsequent consideration on the Floor. This parliamentary procedure is very unusual. On October 24, I debated well into the evening with my opposing colleague about the merits of the bill. I welcomed the support that I received from other members of the Colorado Congressional delegation, who spoke in favor of this legislation on the Floor. However, given the Representatives position on the Resources Committee at the time, we couldn't take anything for granted. That evening, after the debate, I had my staff personally deliver a "Dear Colleague" letter from me to each Member of Congress asking that they support my Sand Dunes bill, which would be voted on the next day.

On October 25, 2000, by a vote of 366 to 34, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved the legislation. On November

22, 2000, the President signed the legislation designating the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve into law.

I was overjoyed with the enactment of our legislation, but I also knew that, in order to make sure the monument made the transition to a national park, the essential Baca Ranch property would need to be incorporated into the park. My staff and I have continued to work with the Nature Conservancy to stave off a few procedural battles and have asked for the necessary appropriations to acquire the funds necessary for the purchase of the Baca Ranch and the transfer of ownership from the Nature Conservancy to the federal government. As of April of 2004, we have managed to acquire all but roughly \$3 million of the funding needed to go towards the closing costs to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is the last step in re-designating the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. My staff and I have, in conjunction with U.S. Senator BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, already made the request for the final appropriation. We are encouraged by the resolve of all of our supporters in this final step. It has been a long journey and I especially want to thank all of those devoted individuals and organizations that have worked with me to make this initiative a legislative success. The designation of this park is a tribute to the natural beauty of Colorado and the hard work of numerous capable and committed people. The realization of our goal is in sight, and I hope that in the very near future we will achieve our common dream of creating the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.

I'd like to thank Elizabeth Peetz of my staff who helped compile the history of these efforts.

ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES ON ISRAEL'S 56TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Israel on its Independence Day, the 56th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel. In 56 years, Israel has experienced more dangers and more triumphs, more success and more tragedy, more highs and lows than many states that have existed for many centuries longer. Throughout it all, Israel's indomitable spirit has conquered adversity.

Israel has much for which to be grateful. Foremost, Israel has so often been blessed with great leaders, with wise and visionary leadership. This tradition goes back to Israel's modern origins. At the end of the nineteenth century, the founder of the modern Zionist movement Theodor Herzl made the most preposterous and prophetic prediction I know of, when he asserted that a Jewish state would be born within a half-century. He made that prediction in 1897, when virtually nobody took the idea seriously. Fifty-one years later, in 1948, the state of Israel was founded.

In statehood, Israel's leaders have been practical, humane, bold, and peace-loving. It is a pity that Israel's neighbors generally have not been blessed with leaders of a similar type.

Mr. Speaker, David Ben-Gurion and the Zionist leadership were practical enough to accept the 1947 U.N. partition resolution, though they had hoped for much more. They were humane enough to treat their Arab citizens as equals when Arab leaders were threatening to drive the Jews into the sea. They and their successors were bold enough to do what is necessary to keep Israel and the Jewish people alive, regardless of what the rest of the world might think.

Usually, the world decides much later that Israel was right after all. Remember the bombing—the then much criticized bombing—of the Iraqi nuclear reactor Osirak in 1981? How universally scorned it was at the time. At that time, I was the only Member of the Congress to commend Israel for its action. How grateful the civilized world is now for Israel's bold move in 1981.

Once again, courageous Israeli leadership has come to the fore. As I speak, I have no idea whether Prime Minister Sharon's plan for unilateral redeployment from Gaza and parts of the West Bank will be accepted by the Israeli people, government, and Knesset. I do know that Prime Minister Sharon's plan demonstrates a clear commitment to establishing a structure of peace in the absence of a viable Palestinian peace partner. And I do know that the Israeli verdict on that plan will be arrived at democratically.

Mr. Speaker, Israel also has been blessed with the great friendship and unswerving support of the United States. It has earned this friendship not only because of shared strategic interests but also because Israel has fashioned a society that embodies the same fundamental values as our own.

Against impossible odds, Israel has established a vibrant, open, prosperous, free, and fully democratic society; a pluralistic society built by people from virtually every country in the world; a society that is politically, economically, and intellectually on a par with the best of the West. In fact, the Arab population of Israel enjoys incomparably more freedom and democratic rights than do those who live anywhere in the Arab world.

Mr. Speaker, the past four years have been among the most dangerous in the history of the State of Israel. The scale of Israeli loss in the so-called intifada is staggering—much of it the result of suicide bombings.

Israel should know that its friends in the United States stand in complete solidarity with it in its fight against terrorism. Its friends here will defend its right to protect itself against all forms of terrorism, against the scourge of those who place no value on human life. Its friends fully understand and support Israel's right to build a security fence to keep out suicide bombers. And Israel should know that its friends here won't be afraid to stand up to unjustified and disturbingly persistent criticism coming from Europe, from those who have managed to misunderstand the lessons of their own history.

And Israel should rest assured that its friends here agree that violence must end before negotiations begin. You cannot negotiate with terror; you can only defeat it. Only when the Palestinians learn that they cannot exhaust Israel through violence will they be ready for the kinds of political compromises necessary for a lasting peace. Israel's friends understand that.

Mr. Speaker, for Israel's friends, today is a day for joy, solidarity, and reflection. As we

join with our Israeli friends to celebrate the remarkable story of Israeli independence, we take special pride in the role our nation has played and continues to play in supporting Israeli security and in promoting the special bilateral relationship from which our nations have derived great and mutual benefit.

IN RECOGNITION OF EUNICE W. JOHNSON

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Eunice W. Johnson, a nationally known business leader and humanitarian. On May 2, 2004, she will address the 129th Commencement Exercises at Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama.

Eunice Johnson is a graduate of Talladega College with a B.A. degree in sociology and a minor in art. She grew up in Selma, Alabama, where her father, Dr. Nathaniel Walker, was a physician, and her mother, Mrs. Ethel Walker, was the principal of the high school and taught education and art at the college level at Selma University. Following graduation from Talladega College, Eunice Johnson earned her Master's degree in social work from Loyola University in Chicago. She also studied journalism at Northwestern University and interior decorating at the Ray School of Design.

Mrs. Johnson is the secretary-treasurer of Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., which was founded by her husband, John H. Johnson, in 1942. Johnson Publishing Company publishes *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines and is the largest Black-owned publishing company in the world. Since 1961, she has been producer and director of *Ebony Fashion Fair*, the world's largest traveling fashion show, which has donated over \$49 million to the United Negro College Fund and other African-American charities. Out of her involvement in *Ebony Fashion Fair*, Mrs. Johnson created *Fashion Fair Cosmetics*, which is a world leader in cosmetics and skin care for women of color.

Eunice Johnson has been an active member of many community organizations in the Chicago area where she lives. She has received the Outstanding Black College University Alumnus Award from the Alabama A&M University Alumni Association and the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Talladega College and Shaw University. She is a Golden Life Member of Delta Sigma Theta and a member of the Advisory Board of the Harvard Graduate School of Business.

I am proud to recognize one of the most distinguished and successful alumni of Talladega College, Eunice W. Johnson, as she addresses the graduating class of 2004, and appreciate the House's attention to this important matter today.

CONGRATULATING GEORGE AND GERMAINE BRIANT

HON. DAVID VITTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize George and Germaine Briant, of

Hammond, LA. George and Germaine were married on July 20, 1921. Having spent over 80 years together, I am proud to honor George and Germaine as Louisiana's longest married couple.

George Briant is a World War I veteran. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the French Legion of Honor due to his outstanding service to this country. Following in his father's footsteps, their son George fought in World War 11. In 1945 at the age of 25, George was killed during the filming of a movie while on leave from his military duties.

On February 14, 2003, the Briants were recognized by the Louisiana Family Forum as the longest married couple in Louisiana. A dinner was also held in honor of the Briants at the Louisiana Governor's Mansion last year. George and Germaine currently reside at Live Oak Village in Hammond, where they are often seen happily spending all of their time together.

I come to the floor of the House of Representatives today to personally commend and honor the marriage of George and Germaine Briant. They serve as living examples of lifelong commitment, love, courage, and faith. Again, congratulations to George and Germaine on 80 years of marriage. I wish you a very Happy Anniversary.

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel and to pay tribute to those who have given their lives for the achievement of the country's independence and its continued existence.

Israel's Independence Day comes just 8 days after the Holocaust Remembrance Day which is the day that has been set aside for remembering the victims of the Holocaust and for contemplating what can happen to civilized people when bigotry, hatred, and indifference reign. Lost 2 thousand years earlier, Jewish independence was restored in 1948 with the establishment of the State of Israel. Independence Day is a celebration of the renewal of the Jewish state and allows the Jewish people to continue development of their distinctive religion and culture.

However, their independence has come at a price. The State of Israel has faced obstacles and challenges to its very survival, with conventional military attacks leading the way to suicide bombers who have killed innocent Israeli men, women, and children. Through these adversities, Israel has endured with continued strength, conviction, and faith. As the only democracy in the region, it serves as a model for its neighbors and provides hope for the future. As the United States had to face the harsh realities of terrorism following the unthinkable attacks on our country on September 11, 2001, the bond between our nations has never been stronger.

Mr. Speaker, the commemoration of the independence of Israel is an important reminder of the contributions of Israel to democracy worldwide. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Israel's independence

and to pay tribute to the fallen men, women, and children that have died in Israel's continued struggle for independence and democracy.

COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and the representative of a large and vibrant community of Armenian Americans, I rise today to join my colleagues in the sad commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

Today, we continue the crusade to ensure that this tragedy is never forgotten. This 89th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide is an emotional time. The loss of life experienced by so many families is devastating. But, in the face of the systematic slaughter of 1.5 million people, the Armenian community has persevered with a vision of life and freedom.

Armenian Americans are representative of the resolve, bravery, and strength of spirit that is so characteristic of Armenians around the world. That strength carried them through humanity's worst: Upheaval from a homeland of 3,000 years, massacre of kin, and deportation to foreign lands. That same strength gathers Armenians around the world to make certain that this tragedy is never forgotten.

Without recognition and remembrance, this atrocity remains a threat to nations around the world. I've often quoted philosopher George Santayana who said: "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." And to remember, we must first acknowledge what it is—Genocide.

Tragically, more than 1.5 million Armenians were systematically murdered at the hands of the Young Turks. More than 500,000 were deported. It was brutal. It was deliberate. It was an organized campaign and it lasted more than 8 years. We must make certain that we remember.

Now, we must ensure that the world recognizes that Armenian people have remembered, and they have survived and thrived.

Out of the crumbling Soviet Union, the Republic of Armenia was born, and independence was gained. But, independence has not ended the struggle.

To this day, the Turkish government denies that genocide of the Armenian people occurred and denies its own responsibility for the deaths of 1.5 million people.

In response to this revisionist history, the Republic of France passed legislation that set the moral standard for the international community. The French National Assembly unanimously passed a bill that officially recognizes the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in Turkey during and after WWI as genocide.

Several nations have since joined in the belief that history should beset straight. Canada, Argentina, Belgium, Lebanon, The Vatican, Uruguay, the European parliament, Russia, Greece, Sweden and France, have authored declarations or decisions confirming that the genocide occurred. As a country, we must join these nations in recognition of this atrocity.